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Assemblymember Lee and Social Compassion in Legislation introduce bill requiring the Department of Public Health to resume collection and reporting of specific shelter data to optimize resource allocation and reduce pet overpopulation

January 31, 2024, Sacramento, CA – Today, Assemblymember Alex Lee (D-San Jose) introduced **AB 2012, the Animal Shelter Data Collection Act**, sponsored by **Social Compassion in Legislation (SCIL)**. A previous version of this bill was introduced in 2023 but was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee. It is being reintroduced with amendments that address the concerns expressed by the legislature.

AB 2012 will ensure that state and other entities have the data they need to direct public funds to animal shelters with the greatest needs, and will allow policymakers to make informed decisions about how resources can be used to effectively address California's pet overpopulation crisis.

Background: In 2017, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) stopped collecting data from city and county animal shelter systems pertaining to the number of animals entering and exiting shelters and their outcomes. Policymakers had relied on that data to understand where the pet overpopulation crisis was most severe and to allocate government resources accordingly.

This bill will require the CDPH to resume the collection and reporting of specified data to optimize resource distribution and maximize opportunities for pets to be adopted rather than euthanized. The bill does allow for CDPH to contract the duties under this legislation to a California veterinary school.

In addition to saving animal lives, the legislation will save money. California cities and counties currently spend over \$400 million annually to operate



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animal shelters, with much of their budgets coming from the state's general fund. Having access to better data will allow them to allocate funds more strategically, avoiding waste and overlap.

"Our bill will collect and provide information that is critical to optimizing resources for shelters to help pets find their forever homes," said **Assemblymember Alex Lee**. "This data will ensure that we have the necessary information to make intentional policy decisions, and reinforces California's commitment to the welfare of shelter animals."

"Surprisingly, beginning in 2017, CDPH took it upon themselves to stop collecting the data, and even took down the historical reports, leaving everyone in the dark about the number of animals making their way through our shelter systems," said **Judie Mancuso, Founder and President of Social Compassion in Legislation**. "We will never find a solution to the problem while being blindfolded. This data is absolutely critical to understanding where we stand with pet overpopulation and how to address it."

AB 2012 will also substantially reduce the burden on nonprofit rescues and private foundations that spend millions of dollars on supporting shelters that lack space for animals.